

REMARKS

This Response are filed in reply to the Office Action dated March 29, 2004. In this Response, Applicants amend claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-16, 24-25, 29, 33-35, 38, 40, 42, 52, 57, and 67-72 to correct antecedent basis and form issues. Applicants also cancel claims 3, 27, 43, and 59, without prejudice, and solely in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicant incorporates the features of previously filed and allowable claims 3, 27, 43, and 59 into the pending independent claims, thereby traversing the Examiner's rejections of all claims. Cancellations of and/or amendments to the claims are not an acquiescence to any of the rejections. Applicants' silence with regard to the Examiner's rejections of dependent claims constitutes a recognition by the Applicants that the rejections are moot based on the Amendment and Remarks relative to the independent claim from which the dependent claims depend. Furthermore, any cancellations of and amendments to the claims are being made solely to expedite prosecution of the instant application. Applicants reserve the option to further prosecute the same or similar claims in the instant or a subsequent application. Upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1-2, 4-26, 28-42, 44-58, and 60-79 are pending in the present application.

The issues of the March 29, 2004 Office Action are presented below with reference to the Office Action.

With regard to the Office Action, paragraph 1: Applicant thanks the Examiner for the recognition of typographical errors, and Applicant amends the claims to correct the typographical errors and traverse the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. 112 second paragraph rejections.

With regard to the Office Action, paragraphs 2-4: Examiner rejected certain claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) based on Krane (U.S. 5,799,063), and Examiner deemed allowable, among other claims, claim 3.

Solely in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicant incorporates the allowable subject matter of previously filed claim 3 into independent claims 1, 24, 42, 52, and 57, thereby traversing the Examiner's rejections of independent claims 1, 24, 42, 52, and 57. Applicant cancels claim 3, without prejudice. All other pending claims depend from one of allowable independent claims 1, 24, 42, 52, and 57, and hence Applicant also traverses the Examiner's rejections of such other pending claims, and considers such other pending claims to be allowable.

Applicant reserves the right to file and prosecute claims similar to the unamended claims of the original application in a related application.

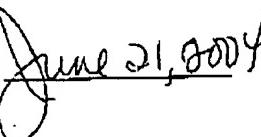
**CONCLUSION**

Applicant considers the Response herein to be fully responsive to the referenced Office Action. Based on the above Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance is requested. If there are any remaining issues or the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in expediting the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at 617-832-1241.

Respectfully submitted,



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